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The Cost of Regime Survival: Political Instability, Underdevelopment, and (Un)natural Disasters in Haiti Before the 2010 Earthquake

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Abstract

This article critically examines the underlying political and structural conditions that lead to Haiti's underdevelopment and the vulnerability of the country to natural disasters. Using the scholarship of Percy Hintzen and Michel-Rolph Trouillot, the article argues that disjunctures in the post-revolutionary governance of Haiti created conditions of precarity, vulnerability, and preempted possibilities for development. Those disjunctures were exacerbated under the Duvaliers and continue to be part of the fabric of Haiti. The explanation rests in the policies and practices of powerful domestic and foreign actors with vested interests in maintaining conditions of underdevelopment. This explains the failure of the county to effectively respond to extreme natural events such as earthquakes and hurricanes, thereby transforming them into pervasive natural disasters. The calamities that the world noticed on January 12, 2010 were simply an epiphenomenon of those deeply underlying conditions.

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There are structural factors related to conditions of postcolonial governance and Haiti's color- and class-based stratification order that have contributed to the country's vulnerability to disasters and its relative and differential capacities for resilience. The January 2010 earthquake was a human-made disaster. It stemmed from the consequences of political-economic choices that were made decades before. It also resulted from the ineptitude of a political system that robbed (and has continued to rob) the vast majority of the Haitian population of development and progress. The calamities that the country has experienced as a result of the earthquake in 2010 and have become a focus of world attention, are simply epiphenomena of deeper underlying issues. The theoretical framework that I employ to analyze these issues combines a critical understanding of Percy Hintzen's work on *The Costs of Regime Survival* with an awareness of the tension between the state and the nation from the perspective of Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Haiti: The State Against the Nation*.

The Cost of Regime Survival

In his seminal work, *The Cost of Regime Survival: Racial Mobilization, Elite Domination and the Control of the State in Guyana and Trinidad, Percy Hintzen (1989)* critically investigates the conflict that political leaders in underdeveloped countries are facing between sacrificing the collective needs of the society and serving the interests of the elites. The book focuses particularly on Guyana and Trinidad, both countries that obtained their independence during the second half of the 20th century. In the book, Hintzen laid out three fundamental needs that a post-independence regime may face if they are to survive: (1) the need to satisfy or neutralize powerful local and international actors, (2) the need to demobilize and co-opt the organized opposition, and (3) the need to retain mass support and prevent outbidding (Hintzen, 1989, pp. 9–10).

To meet those conditions, Hintzen points out five strategies that political leaders in the less developed countries often utilize:

(1) *Ideology.* According to Hintzen, ideology—particularly what he called "practical ideology"—refers to socio-political programs that political leaders organize to communicate with both local and international actors. Ideology can vacillate when it is necessary for leaders to

gain and maintain control of resources from local international actors. Political leaders or statesmen can also change ideology in the face of new demands as these relate to changes in domestic and international landscape, specifically when those changes are more likely to threaten their power.

(2) *Patronage*. This refers to the distribution of state resources in exchange for political support. Through patronage political leaders develop clientelistic ties with elites in exchange for their support. Patronage can also be used to gain mass support or control members of the military and security forces or even political leaders from the opposition.

(3) *Control*. To expand activities under the domain of the state bureaucracy, political leaders use control. Control, in this context, is employed to deprive political opponents of their resources. Control can be maintained, for example, through nationalization of the economy, deactivation and infiltration of trade union organizations, swaying the legislative process to support the government, placing political agents in key positions in the administration, centralizing the state bureaucracy, etc.

(4) *Coercion*. It refers to the utilization of the state apparatus against political opponents, dissident groups, or any segments of the population that intend to engage in activities against the government. Coercion, according to Hintzen (1989) proved to be the most effective and efficient strategy that political regimes utilize for their survival.

(5) *International Realignment*. As regimes in less developed countries face local and national threats, they also face international threats that can jeopardize their survival. When facing international threats, regimes can often seek alternative suppliers for resources that are essential to their survival. Those resources include material resources as well as military resources to guarantee their defense against powerful countries (Hintzen, 1989, pp 10–12).

While Hintzen's Cost of Regime Survival was a case study of Guyana and Trinidad, it also may be applied to the case of Haiti.

Political Instability in Haiti: The State Against the Nation

The term "state against the nation" was framed by Michel-Rolph Trouillot in his book, *Haiti: State Against the Nation and the Legacy of Duvalierism*. The

term serves to highlight the extreme disjuncture between the state and the nation under the regime of Duvalier in Haiti. In his argument, Trouillot rejected the mainstream conception of the nation as "a cultural construct *backed* by political power" (Trouillot, 1990, p. 25). Rather, he views the nation as "the culture and history of a class-divided civil society, as they relate to issues of state power" (Trouillot, 1990, p. 25). This is particularly true for the Caribbean states where we have observed that "nation-building can operate within the state, against the state, or in the name of the state" (Trouillot, 1990, p. 25). Investigating the case of Haiti, for example, Trouillot argues that there has always been a structural division between the Black Creole-speaking population—peasantry that constituted the nation—and the upper strata who controlled governance (who were French speaking and depended upon global interests).

During the 19th century, the Haitian nation was divided into two groups: the peasantry and the urbanites. The peasantry, although representing the majority of the population, was considered *peyi andeyo*,[1] or part of "something outside the country." The peasants were called *moun andeyo*, or "people outside" (Trouillot, 1990). The urbanites represented mostly the urban population of Port-au-Prince, dominated by a French-speaking elite. The urbanites comprised the following groups:

(1) The upper class, mostly mulattoes and light-skinned individuals. They were predominantly businessmen and landowners.
(2) The petite bourgeoisie and the upper-middle class, made up partially of educated black elite professionals, bureaucrats of public sectors, high ranking military officers, etc.
(3) The middle class and lower-middle class, mostly small business owners, primary and secondary school teachers, skilled workers, and soldiers. Trouillot (1990) identified them as a parasite group that depended on the public sector for a job. Without the state, the middle class could not reproduce themselves.
(4) Finally, the lower class, composed of artisans, day laborers, small vendors, maids, and servants, etc. (Pierre-Charles, 1973; Trouillot, 1990).

The social and spatial division between the two factions of the country, the rural and the urban or the peasants and the urbanites, had cultural, economic, and political implications. The peasants were mostly illiterate, and they did not speak French, the official language at that time, the language of the elites. Thus, the urbanites used language to culturally and politically isolate the peasants and to exclude them from the political process even while maintaining a necessary symbiotic economic relationship. The peasants brought their

goods to urban markets, and they brought back to their villages necessities that were not available in the hinterland. These economic transfers between the peasants and the urbanites continued for most of the 20th century (Trouillot, 1990). Through those transfers, the state extracted surplus revenues from the peasantry through taxes that they were forced to pay.

Trouillot explained that both the peasants and the urbanites were conscious of the split between them. As he put it:

> The Haitian expression *moun andeyo* (literally, "people outside") that urbanites use to describe the peasantry is as telling as the *l'arrière-pays* ["the hinterland"]. It signifies both an acknowledgment and an implicit approval of the split. Few urbanites ever wondered how a majority of the nation could be seen as being "outside." Peasants in turn often refer to powerful individuals, especially urbanites, as *leta* ("the state"), regardless of their actual ties to the state apparatus. In short, both sides acknowledge that a split exists (Trouillot, 1990, p. 81).

The peasants were poor and illiterate. The 1950s census reported that 89.5% of the population, many of whom were peasants, was illiterate (Pierre-Charles, 1973, p. 34). The functioning of the urban strata largely depended on the surplus extracted from the peasantry and through taxes. The U.S. occupation of Haiti during 1915 to 1934 reinforced the split between the state and the nation. It did so by worsening the socioeconomic contradictions between the peasantry and the urbanites, and consequently contributed to greater marginalization of the peasantry. Proponents of the occupation often point to the infrastructural improvements that the country had undergone during that time (Ferguson, 1987). In fact, many infrastructural improvements were made while it was in effect. But those improvements reinforced a more centralized system. During the occupation, Port-au-Prince became the center of almost everything. Government administration offices, hospitals, schools, and new infrastructures were concentrated in Port-au-Prince (Charles, 2002; Ferguson, 1987; Trouillot, 1990). The peasantry gained nearly nothing from the infrastructural improvements undertaken during the occupation (Ferguson, 1987).

The U.S. Occupation also reinforced the disjuncture between the state and the nation through a process of "whitening" the state apparatus. Color prejudices that existed before the occupation were aggravated. Mulattoes, or light-skinned Haitians, from the elite classes were placed in positions of authority, for the most part apart from the very few dark-skinned Haitians who occupied important positions in the ministries and army (Trouillot, 1990).

It is important also to note that during the occupation a heavy tax burden was placed on the peasantry, particularly through the export of coffee. During this time, coffee became the most important export commodity in Haiti. It

accounted for 74% of all exports. By the end of the occupation, customs duties represented more than 80% of government revenue (Trouillot, 1990, p. 103). Those figures inform us of the extent to which the peasantry was being extracted during the occupation.

However, it was under the Duvaliers (Papa Doc and Baby Doc) that the disjuncture between the state and the nation (the political and the civil society) became exacerbated. Francois Duvalier was a dark-skinned politician. Along with Jean Price Mars, Jacques Roumain, and other Haitian intellectuals, he was an advocate of the cultural and political philosophy of *négritude* that advocated for the rehabilitation of the Black race in the Caribbean and francophone Africa (Charles, 2020). His version of *négritude* came to be known as *noirisme* that promoted black middle-class power.

Duvalier was a physician who had a history of working with the peasantry. He was known for treating the poor in rural areas and fighting against the spread of infectious diseases. The peasants loved him and passionately called him Papa Doc (Haggerty, 1991). In 1946, he was appointed General Director of Public Health in Haiti. He rose from that position to become president of Haiti in 1957, and in April 1964, declared himself President for life with the right to nominate his successor. He remained in power until his death on April 21, 1971. He was succeeded by his son, Jean Claude Duvalier, who became known as "Baby Doc" assuring the continuity of the regime.

In analyzing the Duvalierist regimes, (both Papa Doc's and Baby Doc's), Trouillot points to three of its characteristics: extreme violence, incompetence, and corruption. While Haiti has had a long history of state violence and dictatorship under Papa Doc Duvalier, it became notably and qualitatively distinct from that of previous dictators. In the process Duvalier amplified the most despotic facets of the Haitian authoritarian practices (Fatton, 2013; Pierre-Charles, 1973; Trouillot, 1990).

Trouillot argued that the Duvalierist regimes' use of violence appeared to be limitless, total, omnipresent, and irrational (Trouillot, 1990, p. 169). It was deployed indiscriminately against everyone, irrespective of position, group, or politics. Gérard Pierre Charles, an eminent Haitian intellectual and politician, in his book *Radiographie d'Une Dictature* (Radiography of a Dictatorship) characterized the violence deployed by both of the Duvaliers as unlimited and unique in the history of the country (Pierre-Charles, 1973, p. 46).

The second characteristic of Duvalierist rule was incompetence. Trouillot (1990) described the Duvalierist regime as "the reign of incompetency, where all power lay with mediocre individuals" (p. 173). Indeed, because of the extreme violence imposed by the Duvaliers, many educated Haitians were forced to leave the country. It was a political strategy to govern with only

incompetence in order to ensure loyalty as well as to distribute patronage. Incompetent bureaucrats tend to lean more toward loyalty and faithfulness to those in power. The effect of this form of governing is inefficiency (Hintzen, 1989). Perhaps people accommodated themselves to the violence and incompetence through compliance (Mbembe, 2017), as the regime created deep-seated mistrust and fear within Haiti's population. Agents of the regime were located everywhere and were employed to report any hint of disloyalty and opposition even of their superiors.

The final characteristic that Trouillot described as a condition of power under Duvalier and his son is corruption. Under the Duvalierist state, corruption reached an unprecedented level. It became rife as a practice that spanned from the president to low-ranking public officials. Jean Claude Duvalier, for example, was known for his lavish lifestyle; his wedding to a mulatto member of the Haitian elite, Michèle Bennett in 1980 was estimated to have cost $3 million USD (Haiti Observer, 2013). In the final 3 years before his oust from power, documents from Haiti's Central Bank showed that he had embezzled more than 120 million USD from the government. As a political tactic, the Duvaliers put into place a system of clientelism that exchanged favor and office for loyalty. This provided extended opportunities for embezzlement as the regime's supporters were able to enrich themselves in exchange for their loyalty. Trouillot wrote:

> Corruption became the very foundation of the administrative machine, its raison d'être. One entered the state apparatus only to benefit from it, for there was no pretense about doing anything else. Corruption became politically effective as never before, it guaranteed the unconditional endorsement of the regime's supporters. (Trouillot, 1990, p. 176).

The peasantry was particularly victim to Duvalier regime, notwithstanding their almost absolute support that propelled Francois Duvalier's rise to power. They were not exempt from his cruelty and brutality, and they suffered—mostly from the inefficiency of the regime. The Duvaliers failed to improve the peasantry's material conditions and denied them access to political rights (Fatton, 2013). The survival of the regime came to be "more easily maintained through extreme centralization" than through the projects that benefitted the rural peasantry in which negligible investments were made (Trouillot, 1990, p. 176). The peasants remained illiterate, poor, and neglected by the state. They continued to be treated as *moun andeyo* (outside people), without the full rights of Haitian citizens (Fatton, 2013). In this manner, the civil society—became totally excluded from the political process. Forces of the nation were mobilized to ensure regime survival and guarantee that the

interests of the state were realized. To ensure regime survival a paramilitary force called the *Tonton Makout*, was organized as a militia to terrorize the population and maintain compliance.

My argument thus far is that violence, incompetence, and corruption were rampant under the regime of the Duvaliers. Their effects on the nation were destructive, consistent with the conditions for regime survival employed in most of the Caribbean and Latin American countries as described by Hintzen (1989, 2018). They foreclosed any possibility for the national government to implement the conditions necessary for development and economic progress.

Duvalierist regimes maintained order in the country, but at a high cost—the cost of survival through a reinforcing of an ideology, patronage, effective measures control, coercion, and international realignment. The two Duvalier regimes also came to depend on relations with the United States in its strategy for survival. They were able to remain in power for almost 30 years. In this regard, the regime of the two Duvaliers resembled that of the American occupation which was also embedded in forms of control and coercion supported by a foreign military force.

The fall of Jean Claude Duvalier came about because of a rupture in the conditions that guaranteed the regimes' survival produced by a complete break with the ideology of *noirisme* that held particularly Papa Doc in power, and that advocated for the rehabilitation of the black middle-class and the creation of a black bourgeoisie. Through such ideology, the state under Papa Doc was able to mobilize the symbolic power of its identification with the black creole speaking nation, and to speak on their behalf. When Jean Claude Duvalier came to power in 1971, he undermined the symbolic capital of his father by aligning with the colored elite through his marriage with Michèle Benett, a mulatto woman. The power of the *noiriste* ideology began to fade away, and the state was no longer able to maintain the narrative as representative of the nation. As a result, the regime lost its ability to discipline, regulate, co-opt, and control the population, leading to its loss of power. The fall of Duvalier did not, however, change the material or political conditions in the country. Instead, since 1986, Haiti has sunk deeply into political instability.

There have always been periods, however, where coercion, control, cooptation, and surveillance fail, and where mobilization of the nation begins to challenge state interests. These were the circumstances that brought Duvalier to power. It was also the condition that brought a radical Roman Catholic priest named Jean Bertrand Aristide to power with the popular support of the "nation" pitted against the state and its international allies. Aristide was elected to power because of his *Lavalas* movement. *Lavalas* is the Creole word for avalanche. The *Lavalas* is a movement that promised a sweeping

eradication of social and economic inequalities and the resurrection of popular masses. The movement articulated rhetoric against both national and international elites and rendered them responsible for the misery and the poverty of the masses. The movement was undermined by the state effects of national and global forces. Those forces overthrew Aristide through a coup d'état on September 29, 1991. Because of intense popular mobilizations both nationally and internationally, Aristide was brought to power after 8 years in exile but only under the conditions of the application of neoliberal policy, which compromised the nature of the *Lavalas* movement and Aristide's government's policies.

There has always been tension between the governing apparatus of the state and the people. Antonio Gramsci analyzed how this tension is generally managed in his theorization of *hegemony*, a term that refers to the ways in which a ruling class gains consent to rule from those it subjugates (Eagleton, 2013). Analyzing the capitalist state, Gramsci identified two spheres that constitute the capitalist state: a political society and a civil society. The latter refers to the public sphere where ideas and beliefs are shaped, reproduced, and legitimized (Heywood, 1994). Legitimacy, here, is gained through consent rather than force. Consent is manufactured through the control of the superstructure including education, religion, and cultural norms.

A counter hegemony that challenges the power of the ruling group can emerge from civil society that contests the dominant class's rules, norms, ideas, and legitimacy, and articulates novel visions and ideas for the transformation of society. Political crises that challenge the ruling group are produced out of a crisis of hegemony itself. This can occur when the dominant class (the state) fails to articulate a vision of development that includes the subaltern groups (the nation), and conditions for regime survival are no longer effective. These are the conditions that Haiti has been experiencing for a considerable period especially since 1986.

So far, I have argued that the Haitian popular class, organized into the nation, has been engaged in a continuous struggle against the governing apparatus of the state. This struggle intensified between 1986 and 2010. The administrations that succeeded Jean Claude Duvalier, with the exception of Jean Bertrand Aristide, have failed to articulate a clear or coherent ideology while the topography of global politics began to erode conditions of control and coercion that facilitated the survival of the Duvalier regimes. The result has been constant political instability in the country.

Political violence and instability have always been a pervasive feature of Haitian politics since the independence. Throughout the 19th century and before the period of American occupation, most of Haiti's presidents gained

power through coup d'état[2], or following a triumphant insurrection (Pierre-Charles, 1973). Since 1986, the country has witnessed a resurgence of recurring political crises, violence, and rapid governmental changes—similar to what the country experienced before the American occupation when five presidents gained and lost power. From 1986 to 2010, more than 20 governments[3] have come to power in Haiti, with an average tenure just little more than a year per government (see Table 1). This is a testament to the current political instability in the country. Between 1986 and 2010, René Préval was the only president to have completed his term of office and to have done so for a second term. He remained in power even under conditions of deterioration in economic performance and his capitulation to neoliberalism. His success can be explained by his ability to build on the ideology of *Lavalas* that appealed directly to the subaltern nation, his skillful use of patronage for political support, his ability to develop clientelistic ties with the economic elites, and a repositioning of his international alignment. The latter is an essential condition for regime survival, as we have seen with Hintzen (1989, 2018). Particularly during his second term, René Préval generated the opposition support and silence through the distribution of political positions and jobs and also used the resources of the state to distribute patronage to the elites through lucrative contracts.

These rapid changes in government point to the instability produced by the fracture between the state and nation, with the latter now incorporating the urban migrants from the peasantry as an underclass. Trouillot's peasantry in today's Haiti has collapsed over the last four decades. The new divide is produced out of a disjuncture between what Fatton (2007) calls the "possessing class" and subaltern groups. The rapid changes in government are produced out of such a disjuncture and the inability of the elite to maintain control of the state and its resources. Such a disjuncture articulates the limits of the Haitian state to be an instrument of genuine development and to create the conditions for effective democracy (Hintzen, 2018).

The Haitian state has become a predatory state (Dupuy, 1997, 2005; Meehan, 2004). Predation, in this way, has become a condition for holding power. Similar observations have also been made in West Indian states in the region. In his article, "Towards a New Democracy in the Caribbean: Local Empowerment and the New Global Order," Hintzen (2018) has argued that depriving the subalterns of access to effective participation in governance and economic processes has allowed the middle class and upper strata to use illegal means and pervasive practices of corruption in order to gain and maintain state control. In turn, the masses respond to such conditions by developing their own political practices and social and economic agencies Hintzen (2018) writes:

Table 1. Haiti's Governments[a], 1987–2010.

Number	Administration	Period served	Time served
1	President: Henri Namphy (Military junta)	02/1986 to 02/1988	2 years
2	President: Leslie F. Manigat	02/1988 to 06/1988	4 months
3	President: Henri Namphy (Military government)	06/1988 to 09/1988	3 months
4	President Prosper Avril (Military government)	09/1988 to 03/1990	20 months
5	President: Hérard Abraham (Military government)	03/1990 to 03/1990	3 days
6	President: Ertha Pascal-Trouillot	03/1990 to 02/1991	10 months
7	President Jean-Bertrand Aristide Prime Minister: René Préval	02/1991 to 09/1991 & 10/1994 to 10/1996	7 months in Haiti (2 years in exile)
8	President: Joseph C. Nerette	10/1991 to 06/1992	8 months
	Prime Minister: Jean-Jacques Honorat	10/1991 to 06/1992	8 months
9	No de facto president Prime Minister: Marc Bazin	06/1992 to 06/1993	12 months
10	President: Emile Jonassaint No Prime Minister	06/1993 to 09/1994	15 months
11	President: Jean-Bertand Aristide	10/1994 to 02/1996	16 months
	Prime Ministers:		
	(3) Smark Michel	11/1994 to 10/1995	11 months
	(4) Claudette Werleigh	10/1995 to 02/1996	5 months

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Number	Administration	Period served	Time served
12	President: René Préval	02/1996 to 02/2001	5 years
	Prime Ministers:		
	(1) Rosny Smart	05/1996 to 06/1997	14 months
	(2) Jacques Edouard Alexis	03/1999 to 02/2001	23 months
	No Prime Minister since	06/1997 to 03/1999	–
13	President Jean Bertrand Aristide	02/2001 to 02/2004	3 years
	Prime Ministers:		
	(1) Jean Marie Chérestal	02/2001 to 01/2002	11 months
	(2) Yvon Neptune	03/2002 to 02/2004	23 months
14	President: Boniface Alexandre	02/2004 to 05/2006	27 months
	Prime Minister: Gerard Latortue	03/2004 to 06/2006	27 months
15	President René Préval	05/14/2006 to 05/14/2011	5 years
	Prime Ministers:		
	(1) Jacques Edouard Alexis	06/2006 to 04/2008	22 months
	(2) Prime Minister: Michelle Pierre Louis	09/2008 to 11/2009	14 months
	(3) Jean-Max Bellerive	11/2009 to 10/2011	23 months

[a]From 1986 (the year of the fall of Jean Claude Duvalier) to 1996, Haiti has known 10 presidents. The period of 1997 to 2010 appeared to be more stable, with five presidents succeeded during the period. This is due to the fact that René Préval, who became president twice during this period, was able to complete both terms. Rene Préval was the only president since the fall of Duvalier in 1996 to the date of the earthquake who concluded his term as president.

> The lower strata, as the overwhelming majority, by and large are without these opportunities, except indirectly through forms of patronage and clientelism. They are forced to create their own conditions for economic opportunity, their own extrajudicial forms of political practice (including riots), and their own forms of social welfare and protective security. For them, the 'societal arrangements', formed and fashioned to satisfy social needs through the guarantee of economic and political rights occur outside governing practice (p. 98).

The way state power has been gained, constituted, and maintained encapsulates the structural and historical conditions that produce precarity within the masses, the majority of the population. It also produces the profound vulnerabilities and worsening of the economic conditions of the countries.

Underdevelopment, Vulnerabilities, and (Un)-Natural Disasters in Haiti before the 2010 Earthquake

There have been profound vulnerabilities in Haiti that have produced forms of extreme precarity since 1986. During the two decades preceding the earthquake, Haiti's economic growth had been declining, while poverty and income inequality were rising (Singh & Barton-Dock, 2015; Verner, 2007). During the 1990s and 2000s, the average GDP growth was below 1%, which was much lower than the 3.5% average growth of Latin American Countries (Singh & Barton-Dock, 2015, p. 43). The country experienced some short-lived positive growth in the years following 1994, when President Aristide, who was ousted from power after 7 months in office, was reinstated by the United States after agreeing to the neoliberal agenda. The initial growth was immediately followed by five subsequent years of negative growth (Singh & Barton-Dock, 2015, p. 43) that continued to contribute to massive urban migration and susceptibility to natural disasters (Table 2), under conditions of dramatically increased vulnerability for the population.

The country maintained its position in the low human development category in United Nations Development Program (UNDP)'s Human Development rankings. Out of 189 countries and territories, Haiti was positioned at 168 in these rankings (UNDP, 2019). Particularly during the 2 years before the earthquake, the social and economic conditions in Haiti were worsening. More than 3.3 million Haitians were threatened by food insecurity, which caused food riots to erupt in diverse regions of the country (International Crisis Group, 2009). The worsening of the economic situation was partly due to four tropical storms and hurricanes that hit the country during August and

Table 2. Summary of the Last Three Disasters in Haiti Before the 2010 Earthquake.[a]

Year	Events	Effect on GDP	Individuals affected	Dead
2004	Hurricane Jeanne	7% of GDP	300,000	5,000
2007	Hurricanes Dean and Noel	2% of GDP	194,000	330
2008	Hurricanes Fay, Gustav, Hanna, and Ike	15% of GDP	1,000,000	800
Total	N/A	24% of GDP	1,494,000	6,130

Source. Republic of Haiti, Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) (Haitian Government, 2010).
[a]These figures are published in Renconret (2010). *Haiti Earthquake: Context Analysis*, p. 14. They are modified for the purpose of this research.

September of 2008 (International Crisis Group, 2009; Singh & Barton-Dock, 2015). Eight hundred people were killed, one million were affected, and widespread damage affected the country's already- minimal infrastructure, which exacerbated the food shortage (International Crisis Group, 2009; Renconret, 2010).[4]

In 2008 the economy grew only slightly by 1.3% against an inflation rate of 13%, resulting in a real growth rate that was negative. During the same year, nearly three-quarters of the population was living below $2 a day (International Crisis Group, 2009). In 2009, 50.6% of the population was living in urban areas, but 83% of them resided in slums under conditions of a high-density and significant health concerns. Only 30% of the population had access to some form of public health, while 70% of the population had no access to healthcare at all (Rencoret et al., 2010). There was also a reduction in remittances during the period as a result of the global recession and the economic crisis in the United States. This rendered the conditions even more dire and precarious. Transfers to Haiti from remittances dropped by 15% (Haiti Libre, 2013). It was in the face of these deplorable social and economic conditions and profound vulnerability that the earthquake hit Haiti on January 12, 2010.

Conclusion

This chapter draws heavily on both Hinzen's scholarship on the Costs of Regime Survival and Trouillot's State Against Nation in order to examine the conditions by which state power is gained, constituted, and reproduced in Haiti—conditions that include control, coercion, and violence. Although these conditions are not unique to Haiti, I have shown that they played an immense and determinative role in Haiti since the independence of the

country and have intensified since 1986. I argued that the way state power has been constituted and its effects have created the historical conditions that produce precarity among the vast majority of the Haitian population, the subaltern.

I also argued that there have been times when strategies for regime survival are no longer effective, when regimentation, regulation, control, surveillance, and coercion are no longer working; this was what precipitated the fall of Duvalier. When such conditions occur, opportunities arise for a new kind of discourse. These can provide possibilities for the emergence of novel strategies capable of altering the conditions that create precarity in the first place, producing true economic development and supporting democracy. These conditions failed to emerge and take root following the fall of the Duvalierist regime. Instead, the state continues to destroy the nation. The dominant class and political elites continue to be beneficiaries of the system to the detriment of the poor. The calamities that the country experienced on January 12, 2010 only reflect the degree to which the profound disjuncture between the state and the nation has rendered Haitian governments ineffective, and the extent to which Haiti's vulnerability to disaster has increased as a result of the way the state power is constituted.

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Notes

1. The French word is *pays en dehors.*
2. See Haiti and Its Occupation by the United States in 1915: Antecedents and Outcomes, published by Center for Black Studies Research.
3. The Haitian constitution of 1987 makes the prime minister the chief of the government, not the president. The parliament controls the government. If they are not satisfied with the performance of the government, they can give a vote of no-confidence to the prime minister. When the prime minister receives a no-confidence vote, the government changes. A new prime minister will be nominated and ratified by the parliament. The new prime minister, along with the president, will choose new cabinet members. Thus, a president may have more than one government during his term.
4. According to the International Crisis Group (2009), before the earthquake Haiti was on the verge of economic progress. The country was politically stable. There was also a huge relief effort to help the country following the four disasters that hit the country in 2008.

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